

SRI RADHA AND SRI KRISHNA OF BRINDAVANA

A BRIEF LIFE-SKETCH

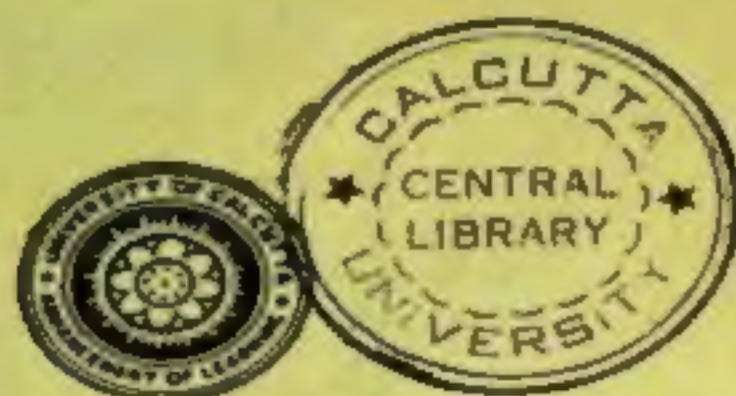
(Mainly on the basis of topographical evidence)

BY

GOKUL DAS DE, M.A.

FORMERLY LECTURER IN PALI, CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY

*Author of Significance & Importance of Jatakas
& Democracy in Early Buddhist Sangha, etc.*



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Rasliḷa performances of Topikunja at Brindavana have also helped me a good deal to write this book besides my personal knowledge gained at the localities.

AUTHOR'S SUBMISSION

Although, this small book is entitled 'Sri Radha and Sri Krishna of Brindavana', it is practically an extension of my earlier work 'Significance and Importance of Jatakas' published by the University of Calcutta in 1951. I found, in course of my teaching work, a new significance of Jataka which I sought to prove in that work. But as regards its importance, none so far, as I understand, has laid any stress on it. Its importance seems to have been merged in its significance. But that is not so. The Jatakas as a whole have, no doubt, an importance which might justly go with its significance. But many words of the Jatakas by which I meant the verses only, have meanings which do not tally with those of their corresponding modern words, such as *Samgaha* meaning in Pali kind reception, maintenance, etc., '*putta darassa samgaho*'—maintenance and kind reception of one's wife and sons. Its corresponding word is *Samgraha* meaning a collection. How greatly the meanings differ of the same word! Among all these words such as : *viveka*, *vibhava*, *jñati*, *kusala*, etc., with antique meanings, a word has been found, viz., *Sanketa*—which meant, in Pali of 600 B.C., a residence where unmarried girls met their husbands, i.e., where they were married. The present meaning is to make a sign. This social *Sanketa* custom has been dealt with in my earlier

book in the chapter on Sociology under Svayamvara marriage system, on page 111.

During my visits to Brindavana I found that Sri Radha first met Sri Krishna in a *Sanketa* and, therefore, there can be no misunderstanding about the fact that Sri Radha married him and became the legally wedded wife of Sri Krishna. The sites of the locality and its tradition also point to the same conclusion. A feeble attempt has been made in this book to bring out this story.

On the basis of the Pali word *Sanketa* the whole story of the Brindavana life of Sri Radha and Sri Krishna thus, comes out as a matter of course like the moon long hidden by clouds of misunderstandings. I leave to posterity to compile a complete life by taking more details from the places where Krishnajeo worked.

Therefore, the importance of Jataka words has to be taken into account and the devil be given his due.

I had a desire to have this book published by the Calcutta University and I am grateful to the authorities for sanctioning its publication.

For prompt publication of this small but unusual thesis, I am deeply indebted to our University Treasurer, Sri Satischandra Ghosh, M.A., but for whose kind support and sympathy this endeavour of mine would never have seen the light of day. I am thankful to Sri Sibendranath Kanjilal, the Superintendent of the University Press, for kindly taking immediate action in getting this book printed in his Press.

It is very difficult to tread on a path not followed by any one before. There may have been many pitfalls and I shall be very thankful to my readers if they will kindly show them to me.

25th July, 1964.

Gokul Das De



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INVOCATION

Unweary Traveller,
Rest thou here for a
moment,
At this Temple of God
—this Brindavana of Radha
and Krishna.

Think with tearful eyes,
Of Krishna as a friend and
a servant, his restless love
and infinite sacrifice
for people.

Think also of Radha,
her life of penance and
self-abnegation,
From life's beginning to end.
Give them a salute
And go thy way.
May this thesis be their service,

Prays Das Gokul De.



Sri Radha and Sri Krishna of Brindavana

*A brief life-sketch mainly on the basis of
topographical evidence*

Introduction

Our knowledge of Sri Radha and Sri Krishna comes to us from the Puranas the origin of which can be traced to 200 A.D. at the earliest. For his wonderful qualities of the head and heart and his superhuman valour in removing men's trouble Sri Krishna was idolised and worshipped in the Puranic age though, he actually lived in about 1200 B.C. and our present object is to show him as he appeared in his own days. Sri Radha, however, did not receive this dignity and recognition but remained as a female devotee of a superior calibre being given the name Pradhana-Gopika in the Bhagavatapurana.

Acts good, bad or indifferent could not touch Sri Krishna who thus deified was kept high above human virtues and vice. He was like the sky untarnished by any matter of the earth. But Radha as a mortal being could not escape the censure of common man. She was not associated with Sri Krishna as his 'Hladini Sakti' the power hidden in him, but was considered an ordinary milkmaid girl of uncommon devotional nature. In the time of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu about the beginning of the 16th century A.D. Radha attained the same

status as Sri Krishna on account of her virtues unattainable by any mortal as seen through the spiritual eyes of the great saint. Her love was so immense that it alone was able to keep the all-pervading 'Parabrahma' Krishna in human form. She came to be recognised as the 'Hladini Sakti' of Sri Krishna, the eternal jovial condition of nature whom no blame can defile or praise can raise high. She became 'Brahmamayi' to whom good or bad things of the world were all the same. There was no need for her marriage or non-marriage as she was eternally joined with Sri Krishna, the emblem of Parabrahma as his Sakti for making him do things. 'Parakiya' or 'Sakiya' love for Sri Krishna was to her the same thing and which ever was thought superior was assigned to her by her devotees. In the Puranic age and also in the age of Mahaprabhu Chaitanya Deva, Parakiya love was considered higher than Sakiya and, therefore, she was made to love Sri Krishna as a Parakiya specially in view of their meeting place being in 'Sanketa'. Ayana nominally remained her husband who though a very rough-tempered man, never interfered with her movements out of fear for Krishna. Philosophically, also, Parakiya love in that age was made to appear the best kind of love which a woman could have for her lover. Radha and Krishna both were worshipped as wish-fulfilling gods.

The world, however, does not always think in the same way. Whatever value Parakiya love might have in philosophy, in practical life it came

to be regarded as a sin and a crime. Krishna and Radha might escape the effect of sin by dint of their spiritual power but they cannot escape being looked upon as criminals in the eyes of society. Certainly, Parakiya ideal is a great menace to society. Hence incidence of their Brindavana lives as given in the Puranas could not be made to happen in their practical lives and for argument's sake the cultured section of people of our age has taken their lives as part of Vaishnava philosophy. Radha has become the cult of devotion and Krishna's amorous attitude towards Radha and Gopas forming the centre of that philosophy vanished from the practical world. They are worshipped as Chinnmay or spiritual gods by their devotees who attach no value to their wordly lives. Sri Krishna and Sri Radha are now considered as Siva and Durga of Purana, who have no record of their earthly history. Hence Krishna of Brindavana has been separated from Krishna of Mahabharata where he is the most active and practical man of ancient India. Brindavana is a dream land to the devotees of Radha and Krishna where they never lived the lives of mortals.

This idea of Radha and Krishna of ours gets a rude shock when on our way to Brindavana, while passing through Mathura, we find written on a building: "Here was born Sri Krishna, the Jail of Kansa". I have heard people say that this is a device of government to squeeze money from people. Thanks to the Purana writers who have placed all the amorous activities of Radha and Krishna in only two places, Gokula and Brindavana. Little by little

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our old belief in spiritual Radha Krishna is restored as we begin to see these two places. Brindavana is full of temples meant for the intensive worship of Chinmay or spiritual Radha Krishna which begins from four o'clock in the morning and continues up to twelve midnight, regularly and every day. Gokula presents a dreary picture where excepting the remains of Nandalaya the whole place lies in ruins. Even this Nandalaya is taken by scrupulous observers as a show created for collecting money. There is no difficulty in thinking that there was no earthly career of Radha Krishna, who must, therefore, be mental gods. We go to Brindavana and come back practically the same man only people make the remark that peace of the mind can be had there. Why, they cannot say.

The notable fact is that during the age of Puranas Mathura and Brindavana was a forbidden land. The whole district of Mathura consisting of twelve forest-lands including Brindavana together with three lands of human habitation where very strong and well-built cowherd people lived, was infested with wild tribes living on human flesh, freebooters who looted the belongings of travellers and men and gigantic wild animals. The rulers of the land were foreigners who favoured the two great non-Brahmanical religions, Buddhism and Jainism which were steadily gaining ground. The Purana writers who were Brahmanas did not look at them with favour and never came to see the actual sites of Sri Krishna's early activities which extended over 150 miles of lands round the city of Mathura and the river Jamuna.

The banks of the Jamuna again were studded with big monasteries of Buddhist monks created for the benefit of men and beasts and intended to appease the enemies of man, with their doctrines of Ahimsa. Certainly, they were not liked by the Purana writers who were Brahmanas. Radha and Krishna have not been represented properly.

Then again, there was the devastation of Mathura and Brindavana by Sultan Mahmud in 1011 A D. and the massacre of monks which caused not a little terror for travellers who were interested in Sri Krishna's Brindavana life. Brindavana became more and more covered with forests and the life-incidents of Krishna and Radha were slowly passing into the limbo of oblivion.

In 1514 Mahaprabhu Sri Chaitanya of Bengal whose heart cried for Sri Krishna, came to Brindavana to resurrect the memories of Sri Krishna's early activities in Brajabhumi. With a few followers among whom there was a native of Mathura he travelled through all the places around the city of Mathura and the Jamuna extending over 150 miles where Sri Krishna played and worked with his colleagues. The descriptions of these places have been mostly preserved in Vaishnava literature. Since his time many devotees have gone round these places and have noted down what they saw and heard about Krishna and Radha. These notes are available in printed forms in Brindavana and Mathura and I think, the actual life history of Radha and Krishna can be learned from them. The Topikunja Rishla performances which are being regularly held at

Bansibat in the morning and at Topikunja in the evening at Brindavana make very deep impression in the minds of audience regarding the life-history of Radha and Krishna.

In writing this small but unusual thesis I have relied mainly on them which are up till now lying idle without any one taking interest therein. In the Rasika performances of Brindavana, Radha appears altogether in a different light. She is not the wife of Ayana but a worshipper of Sri Krishna whom she always adores and addresses as Yogiraj.

The present interpretation of 'Sanketa' in the sense of a residence where in pre-Buddhist times elderly unmarried girls wooed their chosen husbands, will, it is hoped, remove all misunderstandings regarding the relationship between Radha and Krishna and will make these topographical notes acceptable.

Men have different ways of thinking and we have no quarrel with those who ignore these statements and hold a contrary view. The rose called by any other name will smell as sweet. The arrangement of facts is ours and has been made according to our simple notion of consistency. There may be many imperfections. Nothing in this world is perfect and, therefore, they are excusable.

This holy land of India is never free from the advent of Incarnations of Light. Why not make a comparison of their lives and come to a correct understanding? They have all eschewed carnality that causes vice in society. They all preached the same thing: "Help the suffering humanity". Sri Krishna also preached the same thing. The child

is the father of the man. Is it possible to associate the amorous life of Brindavana Krishna with that of his later years so that he might be the fit subject for expression of unholy thoughts? Much less Radha, that emblem of Discipline, Love and Devotion to be one as to deserve the censure of society.

May others succeed where I have failed. Let it be remembered that the powerful midday sun culminating in the glorious evening sun must have had his beginning with the beautiful, sweet and effulgent morning sun appearing as Sri Krishna of Brindavana.

CHAPTER I

THE ZONE OF DANGER

The first five years of Sri Krishna at Gokula

In ancient India when the sages of forest living in hermitages were developing the Vedas into Vedāntas wherein the old gods were being merged into one All-pervading, All-powerful Brahman, Endless, Invisible, Unknown and Unknowable, One without a second, and when common people being unable to understand this subtle Brahman were worshipping evil powers such as Yakshas and Rakshasas for fear of life, and small boys were being sacrificed at their altars for propitiating them, Sri Krishna was born in Mathura as a son of Bāndevā and Devakī in 1200 B.C.

Bāndevā was a scion of Yadu dynasty and Devakī was the daughter of Ugrasena, King of Mathura, who ruled over the Bhojas, Yadus and the Andhakas. The province of Mathura was then called Surasena (Bhagavata). Ugrasena was a weak ruler and was dethroned by his son Kamsa who took up the rulership of the province and himself being a demon tortured his people by appointing followers who were also demons. It was foretold that Kamsa would be killed by the eighth son of Devakī, his sister. He, therefore, put Bāndevā and Devakī to prison and killed one by one their seven sons and waited for the eighth one.

The province of Mathura consisted of twelve forest lands and three lands inhabited by men encircling both sides of the Jamuna. On the east side there were (1) Gokula inhabited by cowherds, (2) Mahavyana, (3) Lohavyana, (4) Belvana, (5) Bhandirvana, (6) Bhadrakvana all infested with demons, and on the west (1) Brindavana, (2) Khudirvana haunted by wild animals, (3) Nandagrana, (4) Barsan inhabited by men, (5) Kanyakvana meant for military manoeuvres, (6) Bhulavyana, a grazing ground, (7) Kumudvana, the place of Kapilamuni, (8) Talvana, (9) Madhavyana dominated by demons (Chaitanya Chaitamita, Chaitanya Mangal, Brindavan Darpan).

Gokula was situated on the southernmost extremity of Mahavyana just opposite to Mathura and was across the Jamuna. Mahuraj Nanda was its landlord owning a vast tract of land extending as far as Bhandirvana. The cowherds who lived with him were Upamanda, Sunanda and Ayana with their families. Basudeva and Nanda were known to each other from before (Chaitanya Mangal and Bhagavata) and were friends.

Rohini another wife of Basudeva mother of Balarama, was living in Gokula under the protection of Nanda fearing persecution from Kamsa.

Immediately on the birth of Sri Krishna the eighth child of Devaki now pent up in prison, (on this spot there was Keshab Mandir and now there is a Mosque), the chains of Basudeva broke, the

jail-guards fell asleep and the jail-gates automatically opened. It was a very dreadful night, the eighth day of a dark fortnight of August under thunderstorm and rains pouring in torrents.

Cautiously taking the child on his bosom Basudeva made for Nanda's house in Gokula. By a miraculous power he crossed the Jamuna but the child slipped from his hand and fell into the river near the other side. He was retaken and safely brought ashore. This place is called Kolghat.

Yasoda, the wife of Nanda, had also at the same time given birth to a daughter. With this new born daughter Krishnappe was exchanged. Then taking this girl and placing Krishna in her place, while Yasoda was unconscious, Basudeva came back to the prison under the formidable showers of rain and thunder and laid the baby beside Devaki who was still in the lap of sleep.

Basudeva was again under chains. The guards woke up, the rains ceased and the child cried out in the stillness of the night. Immediately Kamsa was informed of the birth of a new born baby. He came to the prison, took up the child and killed her outside on a stone. But there came out from her body a goddess in a luminous form and predicted while passing away that he who would kill him was now growing up in Gokula.

Nanda came to Mathura to pay Kamsa his annual rent and met Basudeva who apprised him of the dangers that were ahead of him. He said that soon attacks from Kamsa would be launched

against Gokula and that they should stand well-defended.

Krishna remained by the side of Yasoda in a half-dead condition. The maid that took charge of him was a ten-year-old girl of golden complexion later known as Sri Radha.

Ten years back from now near the northern extremity of Nanda's land somewhere near Bhandirvana or Belvana at the village called Ravel, Radha was found as a new-born baby (Brindavan-Darpan, published from Mathura) and was given to Nanduraj for her care and protection. When Krishna was brought to the home of Nanda she was ten years old, and being well-developed could look after him.

When Krishna was three years old Nanda took him near Bhandirvana carrying him on his bosom. Suddenly the heavens assumed a black form with clouds overhead (Citgovinda, Brahmavaivarta Purana and Chaitanya Mangal). It was not yet time for returning from the grazing ground but apprehending thunderstorm and seeing Radha standing near, Nanda addressed her: "Radha, kindly carry Krishna on your bosom, and take him to my house. The sage Garga who gave you the name Radha, said that you are the best favourite of Sri Hari." Brahmavaivarta Purana says further that while they were coming by the Jamuna bank the very Brahma came and celebrated their marriage ceremony with all the rites of the Vedas.

Our famous writer Bankimchandra has expressed his regret (*Vide* 'Sri Radha' in Krishna-Charita) that our Vaishnavas of Bengal while accepting the Brahmavaivarta Purana as authority have completely ignored this statement. The very event has also been corroborated by Lochandas, in his Chaitanya Mangal a work of 16th century A.D.

The predictions of Basudeva that attacks would soon come to Gokula proved true.

The ogress Putana and the demon Trinavartasur, who came successively to take life of the child Krishna were killed and unhappy incidents took place endangering the life of the boy Krishna. But they were all overcome by some miraculous power. The simple minded cowherds of Gokula could not believe that all these were due to Krishna's occult power. They ascribed all these to the intervention of their household gods. They apprehended more dangers in the near future when Krishna was five years old and Nanda, Upananda, Sunanda, Ayana with other gopas took counsel together and decided to leave Gokula and make Brindavana their home.

These cowherds of Gokula had their original home in north-west Punjab. They had migrated from that place to this part of Mahavana some-time ago (Nama-Bhagavata).

Therefore, they did not mind much for removing from Gokula to Brindavana. On an auspicious day, taking women and children in carts, they started in a body wearing *pagris* and holding *lathis*

for Brindavana and came to Bhandirvana¹, the northern extremity of Nanda's land. Brindavana lay on the opposite bank of the Jamuna. At that time Brindavana was full of jungles and wild animals and so it was uninhabitable. For two months they halted at Bhandirvana thinking where to go (Chaitanya Mangal).

On the way to Bhandirvana Krishna by his miraculous power killed the demons Lohasura, Batsasura and Bakasura who caused dangers to his fellowmen.

¹ Lochandaa.

CHAPTER II

ELIMINATION OF DANGERS

Sri Krishna as a Cowherd Boy

It should be noted that from now Krishna killed the demons to save the people of Vraja and not his ownself which henceforth was never attacked by any demon. In killing these demons he took great pains and trouble to make the place free from non-human dangers.

There was a road from Brindavana to Mathura by which people of Barsan and Nandagrama used to go southwards for selling their articles at Mathura and northwards to fetch drinking water from the Jamuna. It is a fact that the water of the Jamuna which looks blue like the sky is not only very clear but tastes sweet.

This road touched all the seven vanabhumis of the west. In all these forest-lands excepting in Barsan and Nandagrama the followers of Kamsa in the shape of man-eating demons, dominated.¹

In Barsan king Brishabhanu was then ruling as its landlord. Nanda with all his retinue of cowherds, Upananda, Sunanda, Ayana, etc. with their families including Yasoda, Rohini, Radha, Krishna, Balarama, came to Barsan and obtained the land called Nandagrama. All the Gopas excepting Radha, with their families came to Nandagrama and made their respective residences there.*

¹ The twelve vanabhumis and three human habitations on both sides of the Jamuna have been referred to by all post Chaitanya works.

Why Radha was detained by Brishabhannu, we do not exactly know. King Brishabhannu had no son or daughter and there was the custom of obtaining unmarried girls in exchange of money or land. This land Nandagrama might have been given to Nanda in exchange of Radha whom Brishabhannu acknowledged as his daughter. Intimacy which had grown up between Radha and Krishna was not liked by Brishabhannu as they were of different age, character and tribe.

Now, in Nandagrama a new colony was established by the cowherds of Gokula. They all made here their residences according to their selections. Nanda had his residence on a hill called Nandisvara. Nandaram had her place called Manthana Kunda where she used to churn milk-curd into *ghole* and butter. Ayana made his residence in a place near by, now called Babat and the other relations of Nanda also made their houses near-about. We do not know exactly what Krishnajeet did from the age of five up to six, when he began to tend cattle along with his cowherd brothers. Bhagavata says that about this time Krishna endeared himself to the elderly Gopas by carrying out their orders and also made himself a favourite of the Gopas by dancing and singing at their clapping. It is said that at this time he used to feed the monkeys by stealing food from Gopas' houses.

- From the age of six Krishna took his cattle with other cowherd boys to a grazing ground called Bahulavana which was situated a few miles away

from Nandagrama. The road by which they went to this grazing ground touched Barsan and Kamyakvana and also the site of Govardhana. Fully aware of the dangers on the way mother Yasoda was reluctant to send her Gopal with the other cowherd boys; but at their supplications to the effect that no danger would come to boy Krishna she let him go with them. While Krishna would be going to the grazing ground and coming back from it, Radha with her Sakhi friends would stand near the way and watch him singing and dancing all along the way. If Krishna was late mother Yasoda would wait holding in both hands a dish of Krishna's favourite foods and cried in a loud voice "Gopal, Gopal" and Gopal would be by her side in a moment.

Poor Radha, although she was being brought up like a princess and was being taught all the lessons of fine arts, such as singing, dancing, playing music, literature, dramas, etc. could not forget her old love for Krishna, and stood as we have said, on the way to catch a glimpse of his face and the charming fashions of his movements (Saptasati of Hala Sataka 1, First Century A.D.).

Soon Madhudantya of Madhuvana, Dhenukasura of Talavana, Dantasura and Arishta of Govardhana, Byomasura of Kamyakvana were killed at the hands of Krishna and Balarama. The associates of these demons ran away to distant lands. The southern portion of this road became safe for Brjyvasi people. The turn came for the northern side of

Nandagrama viz., Khadirvana, Brindavana, Bhadrakvana and Bhandirvana. In Bahulavana grass also had become scarce, therefore, a new pasture ground was required for the cows. This was found at Bhadrakvana across the Jamuna, which is so shallow at this place that even a boy of ten years can cross it on foot. Krishna, therefore, came to tend cattle at Bhadrakvana crossing the Jamuna by foot.

Incidents of great importance took place here. Aghasura and Pralambadaitya were killed and two 'Davanals' (bushfires) which were about to burn down the cowherd boys were extinguished by Krishna.

An incident of historical importance also took place here. While grazing the cows the boys went a few miles away from Bhadrakvana and felt very hungry. They asked Sri Krishna to give them food. A Yajna was being celebrated by some Angiras Rishis near by and Sri Krishna told the boys to go there for food. They went there but the Rishis rebuked them and turned them out. But, when they went to the female members of the hermitage with Krishna the ladies fed them sumptuously and extolled Krishna as if he was God himself who also took food with them. Krishna's instructions to these ladies were that "They who think of me, sing my name and talk about me, are nearer to me than those who stay with me and do me service. The former are my best favourites". They, therefore, gave up the idea of going away from the hermitage and of living with Sri Krishna (Bhagavata, Khanda 10).

Another incident of no little importance occurred here. This place, being more full of forests and hilly, looked very dark. Now, Brahma got very much annoyed with Sri Krishna. He doubted his greatness as he took food with the cowherd boys and also the leavings of their food. And again, by Sri Krishna's giving protection to them and keeping them always by his side his Yajna suffered as cowherd boys could no longer be taken away for sacrificial purposes. This was perhaps the best reason why the Gopis loved Sri Krishna so much and why women took more interest in his activities than men. Finding an opportunity, Brahma stole away all the cowherd boys and also the calves that came for grazing. Sri Krishna understood it, made no quarrel with Brahma but created out of his body the same number of identical cowherd boys and calves. They all came back to their homes as usual. The Gopis and the owners of cows knew nothing of the change. After sometime Brahma found out his mistake, returned all the cowherd boys and also the calves to Sri Krishna, and begged forgiveness from him. All things became normal. Sri Krishna never exposed himself as God, but always appeared as a friend and a servant of Brajavasis and in this way passed his days.

On the north of Brindavana there now remained the only terror in the shape of a dangerous snake called Kaliya in the pool named after him. The water of this pool was so poisonous that even one died by simply touching it. There was a lot of lotuses in that pool. Kamsa had his suspicions aroused on

hearing these adventures of Sri Krishna and had his doubts as to whether or not this son of Nanda was really the eighth son of Devaki, his would be killer. He, therefore, sent word to Nanda to bring one hundred lotuses for his 'Dhanuryajna' which he wanted to celebrate for success in battles. Nanda came to the bank of the Kaliya pool, and began to cry like a child (Rasila Brindavana). Sri Krishna who was on the grazing ground near by came running to his father and asked him : "Pitajee, what is the trouble with you ?" Pitajee explained his difficulties that if he entered the water for lotuses he would immediately die and he would also die if he could not supply the lotuses to Kamsa. Krishnajeo himself undertook to pluck the lotuses from the Kaliya pond. Nanda cried still more and asked Sri Krishna not to take the risk. Sri Krishna immediately went to the nearest Kadamba tree and from the branch that was bent towards the pool he jumped into the tank and went down. All Vraja fell into a deep sorrow, Radha with her Sakhis came to the side of the tank and not finding Sri Krishna lamented as if her lover had passed away. After some minutes Sri Krishna rose up with his body coiled by the snake's bents and gradually became bigger and bigger with the result that the coils broke. The snake left him and for breathing raised his big hood in the air and vomited blood. Sri Krishna stood upon his hood and danced so fearfully that the great snake was about to die, when his wives taking the forms of women began to pray to Sri Krishna to save Kaliya. Sri Krishna at their prayers spared the life of Kaliya

and ordered him to leave Brindavana and go to the south-sea with his family.

The required number of lotuses were taken by Nanda to the Yajna of Kamsa. Kamsa's suspicions now proved true because he learned from Nanda the whereabouts of Sri Krishna. Immediately he called on Akrura, a common friend of Kamsa and Basudeva and asked him to go to Nandagrama in a royal chariot and bring the two boys Krishna and Balarama to his palace on an invitation from him. Akrura started immediately but he knew for certain that the two boys would be sacrificed at the Yajna. Reaching Nandagrama Akrura became full of emotion on seeing the footprints of Sri Krishna before Nandalaya. Then on seeing the two boys he was so much moved that he became unwilling to take them to Mathura. But, the boys had become very joyful and anxious to go to Mathura and took their seats in the chariot. Akrura, therefore had no other alternative but to take them to Mathura. The chariot moved on but Akrura showed signs of apprehensions. Sri Krishna asked him to take a dip in the Jamuna to remove his mental worry. After bathing in the Jamuna at the place now called Akrura-Tirtha Akrura had his apprehensions completely removed and drove the chariot at full speed. Near Maghera a village in the vicinity of Govardhan-Hill the cowherd men and women intervened, but, at the words of Akrura they let the chariot pass on. The cowherd boys and other Gopas, however, followed the chariot to Mathura city. Upon reaching Mathura Sri Krishna and Balarama changed their cowherd

addresses and put on fine clothes befitting the relations of the king and entered the royal palace.

They did not receive any ovation but got stern opposition first, from the royal elephant and then, from the bodyguards of Kamsa. But, they were all done to death one after another. Kamsa who was seated on a very high pulpit ordered his soldiers to catch and bind all the Vraja people who had come with Krishna to see the fight. They cried and prayed to Krishna to save them. In a moment Krishna rose up to the pulpit, brought Kamsa down on the ground and severed his head. Thus the last terror of Mathura was removed. Here we close our second chapter and before we pass on to the third we shall put in a nutshell the achievements of Krishnajeo up till now.

There is no doubt that Krishna was now a boy of twelve years because the two brothers were considered fit for sacrifice at the Dhanuryajna of Kamsa. Sri Krishna not only made the whole area of Brajabhumi free from non-human dangers by which act of his Gopas and Gopis of Barsan and Nandagrama and also of Govardhana area could freely take their articles to Mathura for sale and come without fear to the Jamuna for fetching drinking water to make their lives more comfortable but also left some teachings for boys and Gopis who came into contact with him. That really proves him to be the emblem of the Dharma he came to preach.

To his boys he said: "Live for the good of others, for, then only you will be doing good to yourselves" (Bhagavata, Khanda 10). He cited the example of a

big tree which stood near by showing that it gave its shadow, branches, leaves to others and existed for a long time getting all its requirements from nature.

To women he said: "None by living near me becomes my favourite, but by thinking of me, by talking about me, and by singing my name. One becomes my near and dear by taking my name only, however, far away he or she might live" (Bhagavata, Khanda 10).

This is the crux of the doctrine of Vedānta, to merge one's little self in the great Soul which is called Brahman, wherein one will find unity with all beings of the world.

CHAPTER III

DAYS OF REJOICINGS

Krishna the Lover of Gopis and as an Army General

Now begins the chapter of rejoicings and the real Brindavana life of Radha and Krishna. Bhagavata says that after killing Kamsa, Krishna raised on the throne of Mathura his maternal grandfather Ugrasena, Kamsa's father, whom Kamsa had dethroned; and, left for Ujjayini to study under the sage Sandipani.

Bhagavata also avers that Krishna became very busy in collecting an army to ward off the repeated attacks of Jarasandha, King of Magadha, to avenge the death of Kamsa his son-in-law. These two different activities of Sri Krishna cannot take place simultaneously. They certainly took place a little afterwards. The founder of Prema-Dharma had not as yet finished his work in Brindavana. The acts of Radha (Pradhana Gopika) and Krishna as recorded in Bhagavata were not those of an unmarried girl and a boy of twelve. The Bhagavata perhaps unconsciously declares that the acts as will be narrated in this chapter of Krishna and Balarama and Gopis took place when they were youths (Bhagavata, Khanda 10, Chap. 14).

After killing Kamsa Krishna released from jail his mother Devaki, and father Basudeva who worshipped him as God personated.

Krishnajee who never loved his worship in Brajabhumi as God could never have been callous to the prayers of the people of Vraja who had gone to Mathura to see the fight. His father Nanda who had so affectionately brought him up was there. Krishnajee could not turn down his affectionate call. Krishna and Balarama, therefore, returned to Nandagrama where mother Yasoda was waiting to receive her Gopal with an anxious mind.

We shall now unfold the most knotty problem of Krishna's relationship with Sri Radha who at this time was twenty five years old and Sri Krishna fifteen in a rather developed form. We have already spoken of the difficulties that stood in the way of Radha's marrying Krishna. King Brishabhannu was always against this marriage not sanctioned by law though not Kirtidevi his wife (Radha performance). Radha had learnt the art of dancing, singing, and playing on musical instruments under the guardianship of king Brishabhannu and was perhaps, teaching her Gopis the same. Brishabhannu wanted her to be married like a princess.

But she could not forget her love for Krishna which had grown up from her childhood in Gokula. Though raised to the status of a princess she was always anxious for the cowherd boy¹ Krishna.

¹ কৃষ্ণ ছাড়াও অন্যদের কি খোঁসে খোঁসে।

কুবচপে কুমারী মো বহুতলসী আঁখিনি তুলি লাবি খোঁসে।

—বহুবল্লভ ভট্ট।

And, she had practically expressed her love when lamenting for him at the Kaliya lake where everyone thought that Sri Krishna was drowned. None but a mad man would say that she, in the meanwhile, was married to some one whom she did not like.

A whole host of scholars becomes reticent when tradition says that Radha met Sri Krishna for the first time over a *Sanketa* in the sense of making a sign, and therefore, it follows that she must have been the wife of another person. Many a shipwreck of intelligence took place over the meaning of this word *Sanketa* in which truth has perished.

Now, *Sanketa* is a Pali word of 6th century B.C. meaning a residence where unmarried elderly girls came from distant places to woo their respective husbands and their journey was called *abhisara*. In the Jataka verse an unmarried elderly girl of twenty five swears to the owner of a mango tree that if she stole any mango from the tree under which she sat she would not find her husband in the *Sanketa* (for further elucidation vide 'Significance and Importance of Jatakas' p. 111).

The map of 'Brindavana Parikrama' published from Mathura gives the picture of a residence and calls it *Sanketa* where Radha met Krishna for the first time (Brindavan Darpan).

This residence is situated between Barsan and Nandagrama. Thus, there can be no doubt about the fact that Radha was the wedded wife of Sri Krishna by marrying whom at the *Sanketa*

she had to cast aside all sense of pride, honour and shame.¹

She was all devotion to Krishna and taught her Gopi followers the same thing. When Krishnajeo returned to Nandagrama he was virtually the monarch of the whole province. Hence Brishabhanu could no longer keep Radha away from Krishna. But, Krishna loved to remain the same cowherd boy as before though he was practically people's uncrowned king. Returning from Mathura he was busy in creating his army, the 'Narayana Sena', from among the Brajavasi Averi Gopas living in humility and subjection, to ward off the attacks of Jarasandha and also of Kalayavana of the north (Mahabharata, Udyogaparva).

Where would he find time to make unbridled love to Gopis? By his selfless heroism he had turned the Brajavasis into a heroic people while the care of Gopis remained in the hands of Sri Radha who turned these women of wilderness into a set of ladies unequalled in devotion to their Ideal in the whole world.

Sri Krishna was loved, honoured and adored for his self-abnegation and valour and not for the melody of his flute and his sweet appearance. Both of which perhaps did not exist. I did not find in course of my visits to Brindavana a single Brajavasi playing on a flute, even in the Rasika performances at Topikunja the flute was absent.

1. বেদে বারম্বারী অতি বড় আদর্শবোধে এই ছন্দে লক্ষ্যে বসি বৃক্ক অতিশয়;
অতিবড় অতিবড় অতিবড় বেদে পাঠক লক্ষ্যবসী সংকেত করে।

Generally, those who have a sweet voice never play on flute. Krishnajeo had a sweet voice as his present descendants have. It is doubtful whether he took to flute at the time when Radha married him. This will be testified to by the very first statue prepared under the order of a near descendant of Krishna, king Bajranabha, now worshipped in Jaypur. He used the flute in his later years.

In sweet appearance and in creating melody on flute Radha excelled Krishnajeo.

Srimati Radha would be the last woman to be enchanted by his flute or by his sweet appearance. Radharani knew in the heart of her heart that Sri Krishna was the life and soul of Brindavana (Brajabhumi) and she was merely its body. Spiritually, she was One with him, and therefore, her single-minded devotion knew no break.

After her marriage she did not go to Nandalaya as a bride to do household works there, but remained in her own residence at Barshan and spent her time by worshipping her Ideal and Love and by training her Gopis how to acquire Brahmajñana¹ so long denied to women through outward acts of worship, songs, dancing and playing on musical instruments, etc. Sri Krishna though, he did not give up tending cows, was busy in training the Gopas how to act jointly for common good—a course of action that certainly led to self-realisation and the creation of a nation of heroes.

¹ She had already obtained Brahmajñana on seeing the picture of Sri Krishna: “কৃষ্ণ অনুভব এক পাটে লিখিতা তেজস তাকর আগে। নো ভগ্ন হেরি দুঃখ পড় কুহলে.....সকল সখীগণ রোপ্ত বাসিনী লাগি।” —বহুবল্লভ কবি।



We shall now mention the several places where these trainings practically took place. The notes are taken from 'Brindavan Darpan' a booklet published from Mathura on travels round the forest lands of Brajabhumi with necessary comments of my own.

It will be found from the actual demonstrations of valour and love by Sri Krishna and Sri Radha that there were two sets of friends of Sri Krishna, male and female. After his marriage with Sri Radha his female friends the Gopis came to him either to worship him or take lessons from him as to how they should live in the world always having Sri Radha at their head.

His cowherd friends, who helped him to tend the cows were headed by two great friends Sridam and Subal and also Sudama who came later on. They acted according to his dictates. We never find the Gopis coming to him without Sri Radha or Sri Radha approaching him without the Gopis.

1. Let us now come to **Nandagrama** where the Gopas of Gokula came for living in safety.

(a) The place of first importance is *Sanketa-bat* where Sri Radha came to garland Sri Krishna choosing him as her husband. The Gopis so long were gladdened by the presence of Krishnajeo seeing him from a distance. But after Radha had married Krishnajeo they came with her and enjoyed his company.

The meaning of *Sanketa* is a residence to be used for a special purpose which was matrimony. It comes from prefix 'sam' plus 'keta' meaning

'ketana' a residence, and not from 'ketu' a flag, or a sign, cf., 'Sanjna' meaning special knowledge, a definition. The meaning seems to have been changed from its original at the time of the revival of Sanskrit literature in the Gupta Age in 200 A.D. 'Chaitanya Chritamrita' mentions the word *Sanketa* towards the end of its Adī-Līla in the sense of making a sign. Though the passage therein blackens the characters of Radha and Krishna it supports our view that *Sanketa* is a place meant for husband and wife only and not for others. The relevant *gāthā* in Pālī is :

Digham gacchantu addhānam
 ekikā abhisāriyā
Sankete patim ma adassa
 yā te ambo avahari.

(Fan. III, j, 344)

Let the lady who has stolen your mangoes go a long distance in quest of her husband alone and not find him in the *Sanketa*. It was a place known to everyone.

(b) *Bihvalakunda* means a place of worship where ecstasy took place. The touch of Sri Krishna was sufficient to send an individual to a state of ecstasy. The place is situated just near the *Sanketa* and we shall not be mistaken, if we understood by it that Radha was sent to a state of ecstasy after her marriage with Sri Krishna. Bhagavata says that 'Kubja' of Mathura entered into a deep Samadhi as soon as Sri Krishna touched her, and that Samadhi never broke.



(c) *Premsarovara*—An ocean of Love which Radha had for Krishna and *vice versa*. This is a worshipful place where there was an exchange of hearts between Krishna and Radha. Man and woman are but creatures of their previous actions and confections. Here they had occasion to open their minds and choose different lines of action in which each was great and remained united in mind and soul. Mahaprabhu Sri Chaitanya came here and took rest for some time. It is situated just near *Bihralakundu*.

(d) *Terakudam*—A cluster of Kadamba trees¹ the flowers of which Krishna loved very much. Radha and her Gopis used to decorate Krishna with these flowers to their hearts' delight at this place, which was intended for Jhulan. Krishna was the very emblem of 'Parabrahma' and by worshipping him the Gopis were inadvertently led towards the realisation of Brahmajnana and were able to renounce every earthly matter for his sake.

(e) *Kisorikundu*—Here Sri Radha with the Gopis played 'Holi' with Sri Krishna. Holi is a festival in which *Kumkum* and water being coloured red and scented, are used to celebrate the advent of spring. Quite near was Ayana's house and he did not budge. Therefore, Radha could not be Ayana's wife.

(f) *Babat*—We now come to the place of Ayana called Babat not very far from Nandalaya. Ayana

¹ Can it mean 'Kadambataru' the famous tree under which Krishna learnt playing on his flute ?

was a relation of Nandaraj and had come to Nandagrama from Gokula. He had no wife and lived with his mother Jatila and a very quarrelsome sister Kutila, and therefore, he yearned for peace at home. When Sri Krishna was leaving Brajabhumi to fight the enemies who attacked Mathura, Ayana came to Krishna and begged of him to leave Sri Radha in his house, for he would be greatly benefited by her presence. The place where he came is called 'Dehakundu' in Barshan. There are footprints of Sri Radha leaving the custody of Sri Krishna. Unless Radha was the wedded wife of Krishna, how could he make a gift of her to another person? Sri Radha spent the rest of her life in the house of Ayana. Jatila gave her the name Hari Bilasini, devoted to Hari, Kutila named her Anurupa, a lady of unparalleled beauty, and Ayana looked upon her as his Grihalakshmi, the goddess of wealth of his house. This shows in what light she appeared in the house of Ayana. Besides these places there are Manthanakundu of Yasoda and Nandalaya on a hill named Nandisvara¹. There are also toys of Krishna's boyhood.

2. We now come to **Barshan**, the land of king Brishabhannu. The first thing that attracts us is (a) the *residence of Radharani* formerly of Brishabhannu, standing upon a hill. There is a shrine of Sri Radha, which now is being regularly

¹ In this hill was found a statue containing the figures of Nanda, Yasoda and in the middle boy Krishna now preserved in Mathura Museum said to have been discovered by Sri Chaitanyadeva.

worshipped. This proves the personality of Radharani beyond any shade of doubt.

Apart from this shrine there are two footprints of Radharani at this place, when she was a little girl. This proves that the Gopas of Gokula must have come first to the kingdom of Brishabhannu with the little girl, Radha.

(b) *Altapahari* A spot marked out as the place where Sri Radha used to dress herself nicely, putting on vermillion under the feet when going to meet Sri Krishna. Does this mean that in other times she remained in her ordinary cowherd dress? The only work which she had to do was to train her lady friends one-minded devotion to Krishnajeo by such outward acts as worshipping with flowers, dancing to the accompaniment of music and singing his lovely career in Brajabhannu. In any way her marriage with Sri Krishna never remained a secret.

(c) *Chikshola* It is a very lovely place as described by 'Brindavan Darpan' for meditation and high thoughts. Even now the scenery and gravity of the place make one meditative. It would not be a mistake if we took this place for a place of meditation where Radharani used to send good thoughts to all the directions according to Vedic injunctions and worship her Ideal and Love, Sri Krishna.

(d) *Kadambarana* This is a group of Kadamba trees which sends its fragrance to distant lands. Sri Krishna loved Kadamba flowers very much and at this place, they say, he was decorated by

the Gopis with these flowers to their hearts' content after which there was a Raslila. By *Raslila* is to be understood not promiscuous love-making of Sri Krishna with the Gopis but a performance of dancing and singing religious songs with playing on musical instruments by them encircling Sri Krishna, having at their head Sri Radha. Wherever the Gopis met Sri Krishna with Radha there was a Raslila and we have at least four or five examples of such Raslila during the Brindavana life of Sri Krishna. One who has seen the present Raslila performances of Topikunja in Brindavana will find how different are the tunes of the songs from those of other countries. The Brindavana tune makes one sedate and meditative.

(e) The next place of importance is one which practically upsets the history of Sri Krishna and Sri Radha. We shall see that Radha was taken away by Ayana from Krishna and not *vice versa*. It is *Dehu* or *Dehikundu*. As already commented upon it is a place of worship where somebody prayed for taking away the person of Radha saying 'Dehi' (give me) from Krishna. There are also in Barsan, shrines of *Ashta Sakhi*, *Kirtidore* and *Brishabhannu*.

When Sri Krishna had finished his work in Brajabhumi, that is, when he had created his army 'Narayan Sena' from among the Brajavasis and found the Gopis well established in society, in love and single-minded devotion, he was about to go away from Brindavana. He first celebrated the coronation ceremony of Sri Radha as king of Brindavana before the Gopis and the Gopas (Chaitanya Mangal)

and then perhaps was thinking of a place where to keep her. Ayana approached him and prayed to him for having Sri Radha in his house (Brindavan Darpan). This episode practically marks the end of Brajahlā of Sri Krishna and Sri Radha in Brindavana. Sri Radha's pangs and sufferings for separation from Krishna began from now.

3. We next come to **Kamyakvana**. It appears that among all places which Krishna visited, Kamyakvana was the most important. It is the same Kamyakvana where the Pandava brothers found solace during their banishment. Here we find Krishna playing with two sets of friends, (1) of cowherd boys and (2) of Gopis in company with Sri Radha. We must take note of the fact that all the wealth of Mathura was now at his disposal either for making an army or for his personal convenience or for the general welfare of the people (Bhagavata, Khanda 10).

(a) In Kamyakvana the most notable place is *Bhojanakhali* where Khali stands for Sthali. Here Sri Krishna used to give feasts to cowherd boys. After taking part in various games mostly for military purpose Krishna's boys would get exhausted and required food which under his management came automatically.

(b) *Lakulakikundu* This is a place of worship where in a pond Krishnajeo with his boys tried to find out in a sport who could remain under water for the greatest time. The boys played a trick by which Krishnajeo lost the game. Understanding what it was Krishnajeo got up from the water the

moment boys dived in and hid himself behind a hill near by. The boys, when they rose up could not find him and began to cry thinking that he was drowned. At that moment they heard him singing on the top of the hill. He had no flute¹ with him at this time, it came later. This was a game intended for military purpose.

(c) *Charanpahari* Where Krishnajeo stood singing there are his foot-marks, and this place is called Charanpahari.

(d) *Khisalinsala* -It is a piece of plane rock where Sri Krishna and his boys rolled to and fro. During this rolling many disciplines of society were violated for which Dharmaraj, who was enshrined there left the place. Later on the shrine of Brunda Debi which was being taken to Jaypur fearing an attack of foreigners, expressed her desire to a devotee to be stationed there and she is now in Kamyakvana. It is said that she made severe penance in the absence of Krishnajeo to see him. The game referred to is also to be looked upon as a military action.

(e) *Setubandha* After the performance of a Rasika by Sri Radha and her Gopis, a Gopi perhaps at the instance of Sri Radha made the remark that Krishna could not be in a former birth, Sri Ramachandra who loved to live apart from women and was a great warrior Sri Krishna proved that he was Sri Ramachandra by making

¹ In the Rasika it is shown that the flute was the gift of Sri Radha who presented it to him on the occasion of her marriage. It had a life of its own and came back to Sri Radha when he was absent-minded towards her.

stones float on water whereby a bridge was prepared over a big pond. This place is called Setubandha and the shrine of Ramesvara as in Southern India was also erected here. This reference to Sri Ramachandra arose in connection with Sri Krishna's creating 'Narayani Sena'.

There are also two shrines of Kedarnath and Badrinarayan here.

It becomes evident from these examples, however scanty they might be, that these festivals or games either held with boys or girls by Sri Krishna were not mirths for sensual pleasure but had a religious touch in every one of them and were intended to mobilise the people. They were not certainly the outcome of promiscuous mixing of males with females. The love of Sri Krishna for the Gopis could only be expressed when Sri Radha, the emblem of discipline, was present. They were all done in public and not in secret. We are told as many as five Rashtas in our Vaishnava literature. No one knows how many more were actually held. The manager of Topikunja in Brindavana told me that Krishnajeo was always present in Brindavana and Rashtas were held throughout all the seasons.

There was a Rashtla held in spring at Kamyakvana. In autumn a Rashtla was held near the site of Govardhana. In Khadirvana there was a Rashtla in summer and we are also told of a Rashtla held in Barshan in the rainy season. There was also one held in Ravel, at the birth-place of Radha (in winter?).

The point of note is that Sri Krishna had contact with the Gopis and Radha from time to time whereas the cowherd boys were his constant companions.

4. We come to **Lathuligrama** after Kamyakavana. They say that here Krishnajeo played Holi with his cowherd boys. There is a nice old building here. It is, however, stressed in the Garga Samhita that Krishnajeo came to Barsan to play Holi with Sri Radha and Sri Radha went to Nandagrama to play Jhulan with Sri Krishna.

5. In **Bahulavana** Krishnajeo got the title of Govinda from the gods and the cow-queen Suravi. Here he came to graze his cows.

6. Next comes the **Govardhana** area which seems to be the most important among all the places of Sri Krishna and Sri Radha's activities. Sri Krishna from his boyhood became familiar with it as he came to Bahulavana to graze cattle *via* Govardhana. Here people were not like men and women of wilderness as those of Nandagrama and Barsan. They lived on a soil which was very fertile and productive of all kinds of foodstuffs.

Rains regularly fell to make the soil fertile and people believed that this was done by Indra in his mercy on them. They, therefore, worshipped Indra. Evidently they followed the Vedic culture and religion wherein Indra is God Almighty. After Krishna's successful adventures in this area he had already become their hero. Sri Radha also made herself well known for her acts of devotion and love among the Gopis. Therefore, when they appeared before them as

ordinary man and woman after the death of Kamsa people were obsessed by their presence and were prepared to act upon their words. Krishna asked them to stop the worship of Indra and worship Mt. Govardhana instead. It is common sense that the people of Govardhana would not dare to stop Indra-worship living so near Mathura if Kamsa were alive, however great their love for Krishna might have been. Therefore, the raising of Govardhana was done in post Kamsa period. Sri Krishna said that it was really Govardhana that caused the fertility of their soil and, therefore, they should be grateful to the mountain first. It is generally known that clouds are attracted by high hills causing rainfalls and flow of rivers that cause fertility. Hence due regard must be paid to Govardhana and not to Indra. Everything of the world is but a manifestation of the same Brahman, small or great, and one that gives help should be honoured and respected first. This is again the doctrine of Vedanta which Krishna preached to these people who were well fed and more cultured than the rest. Personally I had occasion to visit the spot. The children there were so simple, fair, nice-looking and so accommodating that they became my friends within a very short time. Beauty and simplicity come where there is bravery and truth. Yes, they looked very much like manifestations of Brahman and pleased all who came near them.

Indra finding that his puja was stopped, became very angry and inundated the whole area with

heavy showers of rains and frightened the people with thunder and storm. Everything near Govardhana was about to be swept away when Krishnajeet by his miraculous power raised the Govardhana hill (or Govardhana himself rose high at his command(?)¹) and people with their cattle took refuge under it. Indra was subdued and bowed down to Krishna. Krishna rose very high in the estimation of the people who now asked him in humility, whether or not he was God Almighty. According to Vedic religion Indra was looked upon as Almighty God. It was, therefore, natural that Krishna who defeated him should take the place of Indra as Almighty God. But Krishna replied, "I am your brother and friend and no God" (Bhagavata).

Krishna made a *kundu*² (small pond for worship) whereto they say, all the sacred rivers came and Sri Radha who worked side by side with him also made a *kundu* which was visited by all the sacred rivers of India. The avowed purpose was that men and women of the area shall not have to go elsewhere to wash away their sins. The *kundu* of Krishna was the representation of Valour and Truth while that of Radha was of Devotion and Love. They are now called Nyan-kundu and Radha-kundu.

We have now to take into account the fact that the Averi Gopas of Govardhana formed the best part

¹ In a Rasika performance Mt. Govardhana is represented as a conscious living being.

² These *kundus* had practically vanished in Sri Chaitanya's time. He discovered them as little cavities containing water.

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of Sri Krishna's 'Narayani Sena'. The people of this part of Brajabhumi were soon lashed into a heroic people of military type under the training of Sri Krishna and Sri Radha's example brought into being a set of ladies unequalled in devotion and love in all the world. The result was that the unmarried girls of this area of marriageable ages varying from twenty to thirty wanted to marry Sri Krishna. They began to observe the 'Katyayani Vrata', under the direction of Sri Radha which was also observed by her before her marriage with Sri Krishna (Radha performance of Brindavana).

The observance of the vow (Vrata) being over after a month they all came to the shrine of Katyayani Devi of Brindavana and prayed to have Sri Krishna as their husband. This shrine now exists in Radhabag. After performing the necessary rites and pujas, they came on their way back to a very lonely spot on the Jamuna bank, now called Char Ghat, and keeping their clothes there entered the water to refresh themselves with bare bodies. All on a sudden Sri Krishna came to the spot and taking all the clothes got upon a tree and hung them on the branches while he himself sitting upon a branch watched their manners of bathing. When these girls, all of whom were talking of Krishna as their husband, found Krishnaje seated on the tree in that manner, they prayed to him to give them back all their clothes as otherwise they would not be able to get up. Krishnaje told them to be sincere in their acts and thoughts and remember the prayers before the Katyayani Devi and asked each to come

up to the tree, give him a salute and receive her clothes. The order was carried out and he proclaimed from the tree top that a Rashla¹ would take place with them after a fortnight in their area (Bhagavata). Up till now he was having Rashla with Radha and her Sakhis only.

This performance of the declared Rashla took place on the full moon day of the month of Kartika near Govardhana. It is this Rashla that is observed in Bengal.

After its performance Krishnajeo celebrated the coronation of Sri Radha as the king of Bragabhlumi himself before all the Gopis and Gopas of the place (Chaitanya Mangal).

At this time his army was ready and he was thinking of leaving Brindavana when Ayana came and prayed to him to leave Sri Radha in his house. The place where he prayed to Krishna is in Barsan and is called Dehakundu as noted before. When Krishna returned several years afterwards he paid a handsome reward to Ayana (Brindavan Darpan).

At Sesasayi near the house of Ayana in Khadvana, Krishnajeo at the desire of Radha showed his last manifestation in the form of Narayana afloat on the sea of deluge.

Among many other minor incidents these three are important :

1. Sri Krishna killed the demon Kesi when journeying toward Mathura to kill Kansa.

¹ Sri Krishna infused Brahmayana into the minds of Gopis in Rashla and they felt that they were carried high above the ideas of sex.
(বলো বহন ব হাম বসী)।

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2. Nanda Raj who was a very old man was caught hold of by a demon and was being drowned to death in the Jamuna when Sri Krishna came to the spot and saved him.

3. Srimati Radha when she was working with her lady devotees at Govardhana the demon Sankhachura followed her to take her away to a forest. Sri Krishna came there and killed him.

His injunction to Brajavasis was :

Live for others and you will live ever afterwards.¹ Those who think of me, take my name and sing my Brajalila, are my best favourites and I am always with them.

With the flag floating over his army containing the words Truth, Valour, Devotion and Love, Sri Krishna departed from Brajabhumi.

¹ Cf. "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth on me shall never die but shall receive everlasting life." Jesus Christ.

Sri Krishna's 'Narayana Sena' gave their lives in the war of Kurukshetra for the benefit of Duryodhana fighting against Arjuna.

CHAPTER IV

DAYS OF MOURNING

Period of Separation and the War of Kurukshetra

It will be evident from what we have mentioned that although Sri Radha was the wedded wife of Sri Krishna and worked with him side by side, she was seldom found alone with him appearing as she did always with her Sakhis. Even to the *Sanketa gha*, marriage residence, she came with two or four Sakhis.¹ When she met Sri Krishna she was mirth itself and kept her friends in perpetual mirth. As judged from the examples we have quoted we have not the courage to say that she had any sexual connection with Sri Krishna. She was the very emblem of Sattvaguna. The Rajo- and Tamogunas had no place in her character. This was observed by the saint of Dakshineswar Sri Ramkrishna Paramhansa in one of his states of Samadhi. The mandate of Sri Krishna that "She who thinks of me, talks about me and sings my career is nearer to me than she who does my service and stays with me. The former is my best favourite."—was literally carried out by Sri Radha and she did not require the actual sexual intercourse with Sri Krishna to create love.

When Sri Krishna left Brajabhumi the little outward touch or sight which sent her to thrills

‘কুই চারি নঃকথন সঙ্গিহি বেল
নব অনুরাগ করে চলি বেল’—

—জানকি ।

was lost. In his absence she became very sorrowful and aslate. She had all along worked to elevate the morale of Braja naris sacrificing all her comforts and pleasures. This was testified to by Uddhava whom Sri Krishna sent to Brabajhami to console the Gopis. Uddhava was astonished to see how high these Gopis rose in spirituality and in devotion to Sri Krishna, a state which even great Yogis failed to attain (Bhagavata).

What could Radha do now being pent up in the house of Ayana? In her sorrowful condition she became an object of pity before the world. Her Gopi friends no doubt surrounded her and gave her consolation as far as possible. Devotees of Bhaktiyoga never discard the outward acts of devotion from their religious lives and therefore, having no Rasikam she was unhappy, but continual meditation of Sri Krishna had turned her body and mind into a flame of religion which required a place of rest, avoiding the influence of the senses. This resting place was afforded by the house of Ayana.

She was bodily separated from her Lord and Lover and was, no doubt, feeling unhappiness. Still she did not forget the responsibility she owed to the family she was in. Though strictly prohibited she did undertake to do certain household works such as fetching water from the Jamuna and carrying milk or milk products to Mathura for

1. Uddhava was sent from Dwaraka and not from Mathura. The Gopis mentioned the kingdom and the queens of Krishna before Uddhava (Bhagavata).



sale like an ordinary cowherd woman. Her Sakha also did not leave her company, and went wherever she went. We must remember that ago had no effect on her body and that she was always designated Brajakisoni, the evergreen daughter of Vraja. It was a fact that Sri Krishna who could create as many bodies as he liked was always with her in spirit. The condition of her mind at this time cannot be properly understood. But in the absence of Sri Krishna there was mourning all over the Brajabhumi. Every one, even the trees and flowers, showed signs of mourning. Although Sri Radha was coronated king of Brindavana by Sri Krishna himself she never gave any indication of this fact by her acts, but remained in the family of Ayana as his household Lakshmi maintaining peace and happiness.

Sri Krishna after pacifying the political trouble which arose after the death of Kansa, was by this time in Dvaraka. He had finished his studies under the sage Sandipani at Ujjain. We cannot persuade ourselves to believe that immediately after killing Kansa he went to Ujjain for study, for then, Jarasandha would be the last person to have him undisturbed at the place of his teacher. Sri Krishna must have given Jarasandha a thrashing defeat with the help of his 'Narayana Sena' and kept his soldiers, his former cowherd boys, alert when he was studying at the Sandipani Pethsala.¹ After he had finished his studies he toured all over India

¹ We are told in the Bhagavata that Sudama was with him when Krishna was studying at the Sandipani Pethsala.



with his 'Narayana Sena' and conquered all the kings.

Sri Krishna met for the first time the five Pandavas at Draupadi's Svayamvara Sabha and was going to and coming from Panchala now and then. On his way he used to halt at the bank of the Jamuna where he had a beautiful residence built by a Danava devotee (Nama Bhagavata).

A few years after his departure from Brindavana, people heard the musical notes coming from a flute played on by Krishnajeet at Bansbat. It stands very near to the great road which led to Mathura via Nandagrama and Barsan. Here people came to fetch water from the Jamuna for drinking purposes only. We have tested its water. It is not only clear but also sweet to the taste (July, 1958). The Gopas collected on the spot of Bansbat and made performance of dancing and singing round Krishnajeet¹ But Radha did not respond. Swami Vivekananda who visited the spot and was inspired by the ideas of Radha wrote a song the burden of which is that Radha wanted to go away avoiding his company when he was dressed like a Madanmohana. Holy Mother of Belur Math also observed that she did not find in her trance Radha there (Durgadevi of Saradeswari Ashram).

Constant meditation of Sri Krishna made her body luminous and sedate and there was every

¹ They say that Siva came to witness the Rasika to see how Krishna was giving Brahmajnana to Gopis

chance of her becoming One with Sri Krishna if she came near him.

That she did not respond to the call of Sri Krishna either playing on flute or singing songs, may be easily judged from the fact that Sri Chaitanya who travelled through all the twelve forest-lands and also through Barsan and Nandagrama and graced the spots where Radha and Krishna met each other, such as Danaghat, Promsarovar, the two places of Rasika (1) at Govardhana and (2) at Khadirvana, Sosaiya, Kalyadaman, Churghat, Bolvana and Gokula and also those where Krishna performed wonderful deeds such as Kesighat and Akrura-tutha, did not see Bansubati though it fell on the way. It is certain that Krishna appearing in the form of a king or Madanmohana did not appeal to her mind. She was meditating him as the simple cowherd boy of Brindavana.

To get back Sri Radha, Sri Krishna paid Ayana Radha's weight of gold as ransom. This might have given a shock to Sri Radha. Was she to be treated as a furniture ?

According to the testimony of 'Prabhas Khanda' of Skandv Purana she was by this time thinking of becoming One with Sri Krishna. At any rate, she was thinking of taking leave from Ayana in whose house she had found a refuge in her days of suffering. She was quite contended if she could catch a glimpse of Sri Krishna from a distance when she came to fetch water from the Jamuna. Radha, therefore, went her way to Ayana's house.

The poet Jaydeva long afterwards in his 'Git Govinda' does in vain invoke her to give up this attitude of noncompliance and come to her Lord.

* * * *

The Lord of your heart in the attire of a beautiful Lover is waiting for you. Oh, nice-looking lady, go to him without delay, seek him out and he will be glad. He is now living in 'Dhare Samire' on the Jamuna Bank.

* * * *

Your company will be prized by him very much, even the dust of your body sent by the wind. A *Sauketa* has been built up with your name written thereon and he is softly playing on his flute.

* * * *

Lovely friend, cast aside your foot ornaments and go without making any noise which causes attraction to sensuality. Come to your residence which lies in the darkness of forest. And, put on your blue *sari*.

* * * *

Every leaf that falls making a sound startles him and he thinks that you are coming. The bed is prepared and his eyes are anxiously expecting your arrival.

* * * *

Towards the end of the Git Govinda, Jaydeva makes Sri Krishna aware of his mistakes in the

domain of love and declare before Radha that he is in fault and, therefore, let him have her feet, the fountain of pure love which is the poison for Madana (sensuality).

One thing becomes evident from Jaydeva that Radha since her coming to Ayana's house had kept aside her blue *sari* and wore white cloth but as Sri Krishna had taken up his residence in Brindavana she was invoked to put on blue *sari* as before.

Sri Krishna, therefore, in his residence used to stay with Arjuna who was in age like his grandson. But Krishna though over sixty was all along a Kisor hence Arjuna became his 'Sakha', a bosom Braja-friend of his. Bhagavata bears testimony to this fact (Nama-Bhagavata).

Being thus disappointed in bringing Radha to his side Krishnajeet thought of another plan. The Manasi Ganga, a small rivulet which flowed by Mount Govardhana, was turned into a big river by the heavy rains caused by Indra in his rage against the Braja people who were put to much hardship when going to Mathura to sell their articles. They had to take the help of a boatman and pay him some money. Krishnajeet still a Braja-kisor thought of playing the part of a boatman for taking poor Gopas and Gopis to the other side of the river without any charge. In his old costume as a cow-herd boy he appeared as a boatman on the bank of Manasi Ganga. Here he met Sri Radha still looking like a Braja-kisor humbly carrying on her head the loads of milk and milk products for selling them in the market of Mathura.

Lochanadas in his 'Chaitanya Mangal' says that there was a road from Gokula to Mathura by which people travelled via Mount Govardhana and on the river Manasi Ganga which they had to cross by a boat Krishna played with Radha and Gopis.

* * * *

Of course, here Gokula means Nandagrama. The original Gokula lay across the Jamuna from where the Braja people had migrated to Nandagrama long ago.

According to a Bengal nursery rhyme Radha at this time had her blue *sari* on.

Once more, Sri Krishna in the dress of a cow-herd boy and Sri Radha of a girl met each other on the bank of Manasi Ganga. It appears that she at least kept one word of Jaydeva, viz., that she put on her blue *sari*. The story about the Gopis being taken in a boat manned by Sri Krishna relates to this place under the caption 'Nauka-vilas'. This work of Sri Krishna towards the end of his Brindavana life has earned for him the name of "One that carries his poor devotees across the sea of suffering and re births without any charge".

Though still a Braja kisor, he was at this time in the neighbourhood of eighty. He took up the work of Sarathu of Arjuna in the war of Kurukshetra when he was eighty-six. So at this time he might have been trying to make a compromise between the contending parties by staying at Mathura.

The war of Kurukshetra could not be avoided. The inevitable happened. The fire flared up and went out destroying all tyranny and wickedness. Virtue was established on the throne. Draupadi no longer had her hair dishevelled but tied into a knot. The down trodden women of India once more asserted their birth-rights.

By the training of Sri Radha the 'Averi' women of Vraja who were noted for their relaxation in morals, had become a set of ladies unparalleled in devotion and character in all India if not in all the world. Sri Krishna by his valour and self abnegation had turned the 'Averi' Gopas into an army of great power under the denomination of 'Narayani Sena' with whose help he had won every land he visited in India and had become the king (truly speaking an emperor) of Dvaraka, although, he did not dethrone any king he conquered. Krishna is said to have given every lady of a king's harem the honour and the title of 'Mahishi'—a queen—and as such an impetus to women of India to rise in the estimation of men. Both Radha and Krishna fulfilled the purpose for which they came. The establishment of 'Prem Dharma' by which is meant 'abnegation of self for the good of others', was complete.¹

¹ This definition was given by Swami Premasandip of Belur Math

CHAPTER V

FINAL RELEASE

The first Prabhasa and the end of Brindavana Life

United in mind and soul with Sri Krishna remained Sri Radha in the house of Ayana doing when necessary household works for maintaining peace and happiness in the family. But time was fast approaching when she should be One with her Lord (Prabhas Khanda).

After the war of Kurukshetra Yudhishtira was placed on the throne of Hastinapur and Sri Krishna who dedicated his life to the welfare of people, was busy in celebrating 'Asvamedha' Yajna for Yudhishtira to see him recognised as the Universal monarch of India and when that was done he retired to Dvaraka. Basudeva his father who was a citizen of Mathura perhaps also went with him and settled at Dvaraka in his old age. Sri Krishna asked him if he desired to perform a Yajna for his salvation. Basudeva said that he had a mind to do it but he needed money for the celebration. In that case Sri Krishna agreed to finance it. But where should be the venue of this Yajna which is to be called Dana Yajna? It was found advisable to hold this Yajna near the field of Kurukshetra on the bank of Sarasvati river not very far from Mathura and Delhi. (This Prabhasa was not of Dvaraka. Bh. 10/82/47. Vide note on 'Prabhasa', p. 166, Nama-Bhagavata.)

Grand preparations went on for arranging seats to accommodate visitors from all parts of India. While all India was invited Brindavana remained uninvited at the special desire of Sri Krishna who knew that Radha with her Sakhis and mother Yasomati with her Gopis would only come here to die. The date was fixed on the new-moon day, the 15th day of a dark fortnight of the month of Bhadra. It was also the day of solar eclipse (*vide* Nama-Bhagavata, p. 166).

The news of Sri Krishna supervising a Yajna near Brindavana reached the Brajavasis rather late. The 'Narayani Sena' mostly composed of the Gopas of Brindavana had already given their lives in the war of Kurukshetra. So there remained very few men in Brindavana. Mother Yasomati though not invited started practically with all Braja men and women taking with her sufficient provision for the workers of the Yajna. Radha, for his omission and commission in life, induced Ayana to make penance for salvation and started for the place of Yajna with her Sakhis and also with Jatila and Kutila (Prabhas Khanda).

Unfortunately they were late in reaching the pandal and in the absence of Krishna in Brindavana, looked so miserable that the doors were closed against them and could not get admission. The fervent call of mother Yasoda crying "Gopal, Gopal" holding up in her hands a plate of sweet-meats made Sri Krishna nervous. He left off his work and rolled like a boy on the ground crying 'Ma Ma' rending the sky and the air of the place of

Prabhasa and wanted to be dressed as Gopal. Once more, for the last time, in the costume of a cowherd boy of Brindavana he ran to mother Yasomati and rose up to her lap in great glee saying 'Ma Ma'. Sri Radha and her Sakhis were also received honourably and accommodated in quarters befitting them (Prabhas Khanda).

On an auspicious night, on the full-moon day, when Sri Krishna was walking on the river bank in the mood of 'Raslila' Sri Radha with her Sakhis approached Krishnajeet singing all the way.¹ They assumed the forms of flames and entered the body of their Lord and Lover and became One with Him (Prabhas Khanda).

All the other Gopis and mother Yasoda are said to have perished in the flood of Sarasvati which swept them away at night after the ceremony was over.

This marks the end of Radha and Krishna Lila in Brindavana.

¹ One or two lines of a Bengali song may be quoted :

আজ জেদাভিত মন হবে উদ্ভাসন
কৃত কৃত বলি সদি আমি আহুতি
দিব জীবন ।

We think we have been able to point out to some extent Sri Krishna and Sri Radha as friends and lovers of the people of Brindavana and believe that they are always with them without separation ready to serve in any capacity.

Thus spoke the Lord: "Those who rightly understand my life's activities will not have to be reborn but will come to me in the end." (Gita, sl. 9, Chap. IV.)

JAI HIND

1.2.66